KEYWORDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: A VOCABULARY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY
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This seminar will revisit and update the modern progenitor of encyclopaedic overviews of the conceptual foundations of the social sciences and humanities. Since the advent of science studies, science itself also falls under the conceptual domain of knowledge creation and dissemination.

Raymond Williams, professor of drama and public intellectual par excellence, produced *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* in 1976 and revised it in 1983, the year of his retirement from Cambridge. Although he lived seven more years, Williams did not again revisit his selection of the open-ended and emergent conceptual resources available to think with across disciplines. Unlike most of the encyclopaedic guides that followed, Williams did not attempt an "objective" review of consensus in meaning and utility of the 131 entries in the 1983 version. Rather, he produced a connected series of essays (1-5 pages) that outlined the potential scope and form of his broad (Marxist) paradigm for the sciences humaines. The context of his thinking was a post-war expansion of knowledge domains (cybernetics), disciplinary boundaries (emerging area studies programs) and geopolitical borders (world systems theory) that had not yet coalesced into an overarching new paradigm.

We stand at the crossroads of another realignment of knowledge - an explosion of information alongside blatant failures of neoliberal capitalism and globalization in their present forms. Theory and Criticism is well situated to cross the boundaries and synthesize new theoretical tools (redefining the old terms and adding new ones - conventional vs. creative metaphors for thought, drawing on work from French, German, and other knowledge traditions, from the academy and from everyday knowledge). We still want to talk about conventional concepts (e.g., hegemony, civilization, culture, ecology, imperialism, myth, realism, tradition) but their meanings have evolved considerably over the last four decades. We also want to add concepts like simulacrum, bricoleur, chaos, complexity, fractals, hierarchy, scale, schizoanalysis, standpoint, oral tradition, epistemic murk, epigenetics. Both lists are exemplary only – the sky is the limit. What concepts are we using and where does the absence of a shared vocabulary stifle investigation? Anthropology adds a cross-cultural perspective to the Eurocentric theoretical vocabulary inherited from the Enlightenment. Hopefully we will have a range of backgrounds in the seminar and they will be able to calibrate their conceptual tools for mutual communication.

The seminar will negotiate the list of terms to be included, with each student exploring three terms (etymology, appearance in theoretical discourse, potential for elaborating an evolving paradigm adapted to contemporary world condition).

**Section I** (2 weeks):
Close reading of Williams and preliminary triage on the list of conceptual terms and the theorists who developed them.
Week 2 - choice of terms (in writing) and sign-up for presentation and discussion (10%)

**Section II** (3 weeks):
Comparison of other efforts to set out key terms, e.g. CSTC compendium Tilottama and others did years ago, and of course Wikipedia (a way to publish our results?). Crossings of disciplinary boundaries and national traditions. Why does it matter and for which publics?

Some possible readings though others will be added. Setting out a frame for crossing boundaries; transportability of concepts; changes in their meaning over time; the evolution of standpoint based disciplines (e.g. feminist standpoint epistemology, Indigenous Studies, Traditional Ecological Knowledge); emergence of interdisciplines.

Sherrie Ortner, Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties - in Dirks, Eley and Ortner eds., 1993
Donna Haraway, Simians, Cyborgs and Women - selections - 1991
Gregory Bateson, Steps Toward an Ecology of Mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution and epistemology, 1972

Neal McLeod, Cree Narrative Memory, 2007

Alessandro Duranti, ed., Key Terms in Language and Culture, 2001

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 1980

Bruno Latour, We have Never Been Modern, 1991

**Section III:**
Thematically ordered presentation of terms for discussion in class. Written essays to be circulated one week in advance. Three presentations by each student (20% each).

**Section IV (2 weeks):**
Synthesis outlining the parameters of a new paradigm for which my present cover term is Complexity. Each student will properly hang it together in their own way. Each student will write their synthesis based on texts read together and discussed in class (30%, due one week after last class).

Students are expected to attend class. All written work is dependent on the discussion in class.